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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

MARKETING FLORIDA TRUCK CROPS

PHOTO SERIES NO. 40

JUNE 1959



N-26500--A Federal-State inspector examines celery at a cooling plant. He compares the quality and condition of the celery with grade standards set up by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and issues a certificate of inspection.

Florida is one of the leading States in the production of truck crops for the fresh market. The farm value of these crops averages over \$130,000,000 a year, and Florida produce appears in markets all over the country. These USDA pictures, taken for the Agricultural Marketing Service, show scenes of the harvesting and packing of some of the State's important truck crops.



N-26562--Sweet peppers are emptied onto the conveyor belt that starts them on their journey through the packing plant.



N-26645--Picker empties tomatoes into a field crate.



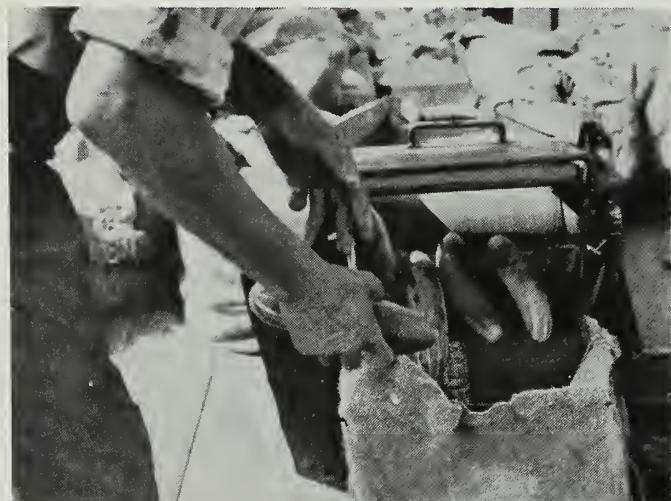
N-26528--Cucumbers move along the grading belt as workers sort them for size and grade and put them in the proper bins.



N-26626--Cucumber harvesting with a mechanized loader. Workers move down the rows behind the machinery, placing the picked cucumbers on the conveyor belt at the rear of the loader.



N-26627--Cucumbers move toward the center of the loader on conveyor belts, where another belt will take them forward to the sacking station. The power-takeoff shaft on the tractor operates the conveyor system.



N-26631--A worker at the sacking station removes oversize and damaged cucumbers before they drop into the sack.



N-26542--The sacks of field-graded cucumbers are transferred from a field trailer to a truck. The high clearance of the trailer allows it to straddle rows as it moves through the field without injuring the vines.



N-26560--Cucumbers are unloaded at the packing plant.



N-26525--Poorly developed and defective cucumbers are removed as they are carried toward the washing unit. A series of rollers serves as a grading table. The cucumbers are washed and waxed before they go to the packing stations.



N-26529--Different sizes of "cukes" are packed separately. These workers are separating the U. S. No. 1's from other sizes and grades of cucumbers and packing them into shipping cartons.



N-26532--Other cucumbers are shipped to market in bushel baskets.



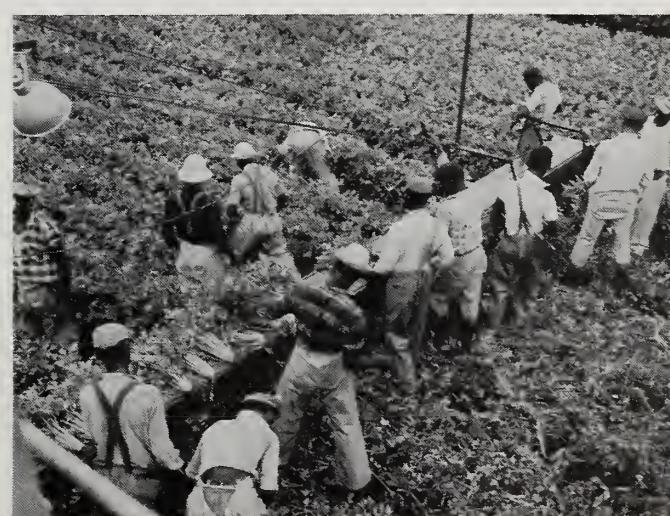
N-26534--A Federal-State inspector examines a sample of cucumbers to make sure they meet U. S. standards. He will issue inspection certificates showing the grade and size for each lot of cucumbers, according to standards set up by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.



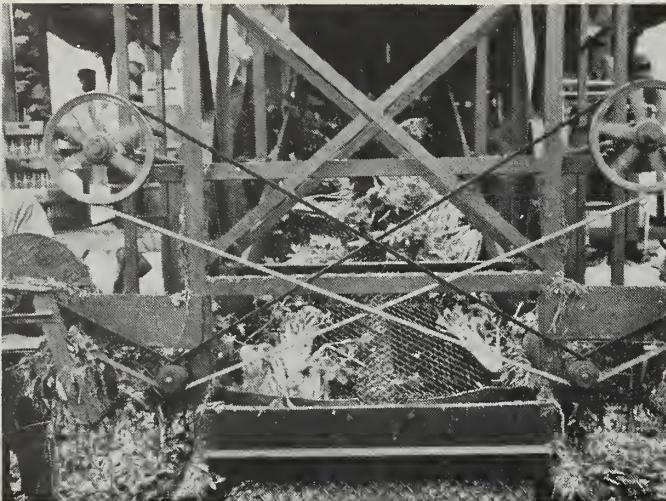
N-26555--Filled and covered baskets of cucumbers are wheeled into a refrigerated truck, for shipment to distant markets.



N-26444--This celery harvester, commonly called a "mule train," travels five or six feet a minute, covering 24 rows of celery. The celery is cut, trimmed, washed, sorted, and packed in crates before it leaves the field harvester.



N-26443--These men cut the celery by hand and place the bunches on the conveyor belt that carries them into the harvester. Usually, 24 cutters feed the "train."



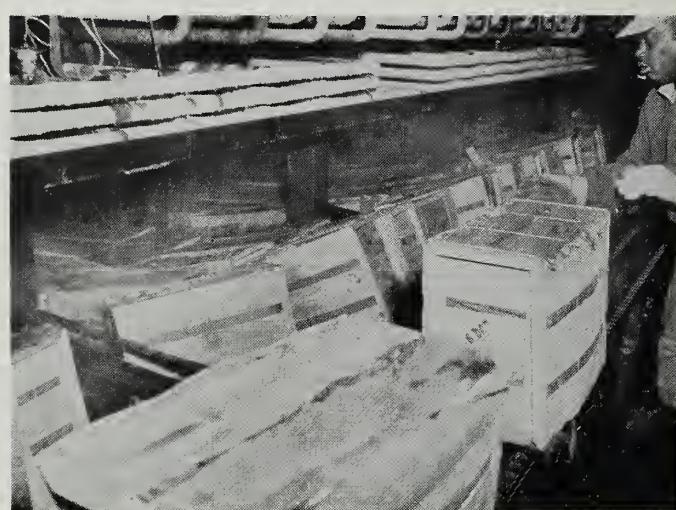
N-26438--Celery with tops trimmed to uniform length moves into the harvester. In an 8-hour day, a "mule train" can pack up to 3,000 crates of high-quality celery.



N-26441--The celery, after washing, is packed into crates. The crates then move down roller conveyors and are stacked on a field trailer which will carry them out of the field.



N-26435--A crawler tractor pulls the field trailer to a waiting trailer truck. The trailer truck hauls the freshly-cut celery directly to a hydro-cooling plant, where it will be quick-cooled to preserve its freshness. Celery sometimes is grown on muck soils, and crawler-type equipment is needed to travel across the fields.



N-26505--Crates of celery are being removed from a conveyor and placed in a hydro-cooler where they are quickly cooled by overhead water-sprays. The temperature of the water is usually around 32 degrees.



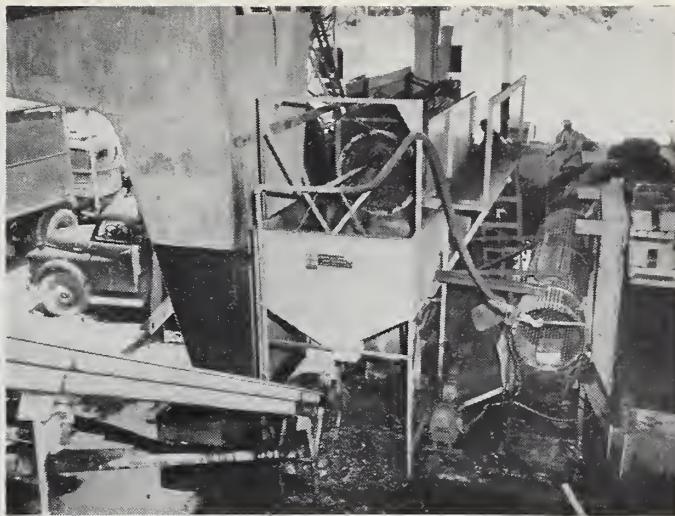
N-26429--Here is the latest wrinkle in radish harvesting--a machine that digs and trims five rows of radishes at a time. Earlier harvesting machines were one-row walking types.



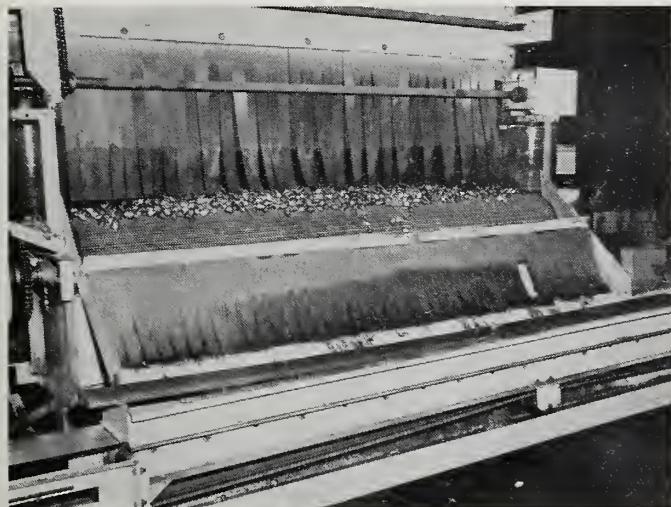
N-26431--The machine delivers the radishes to a field truck that follows alongside. The truck will then haul the radishes in bulk to the packing plant. Radishes harvested with older types of equipment usually are handled in bags.



N-26489--At the packing plant, bags of radishes are dumped into this machine, which removes undersized radishes, soil, and trash.



N-26492--Radishes are washed and further foreign material and undersized radishes are removed in this revolving machine, sometimes called a "squirrel cage".



N-26494--Radishes move through the hydro-cooler where they are quickly cooled by overhead sprays of icy water.



N-26495--After the radishes are washed and hydro-cooled, they are generally packed into wire-bound crates or consumer-sized film bags for shipment.



N-26639--Picking crew at work in a field of staked tomatoes. The stakes train the tomato plants upward. This not only makes picking easier, but many growers believe it induces larger fruit with less scarring and disease.



N-26648--Field crates of tomatoes are loaded on a truck, in the first leg of their journey.



N-26324--The tomatoes are washed, and then quickly dried by forced hot air from these huge fans.



N-26332--At the grading station, the tomatoes are sorted for defects and color. Pink tomatoes are placed on the upper belt, and No. 2 tomatoes go on the lower one. Only the No. 1's are left on the main conveyor.



N-26335--These modern automatic sizers separate the tomatoes into various sizes. The smallest tomatoes drop through the belt holes first.



N-26661--These tomatoes are being individually wrapped and packed in shipping lugs.



N-26337--Other tomatoes are packed in fiberboard cartons.



N-26338--Color, size and defects all enter into the U. S. grades for tomatoes. This Federal-State inspector is examining a sample carton of tomatoes before issuing a grade certificate.



N-26669--Lugs of individually-packed tomatoes are loaded into a refrigerated rail car for shipment to market.



N-26668--The lugs are carefully stacked inside the car, to prevent shifting of the load during transit, and to insure proper air circulation and cooling.



N-26551--A pepper-picker empties her bucket of sweet peppers into a picking lug.



N-26545--Peppers are also picked into bags. Here, bags are picked up in the field and loaded on a truck for transportation to the packing plant. Peppers are grown on sandy soils, and this truck is equipped with special tires for traveling in the sand.



N-26564--In the washing unit, the peppers get a thorough dousing that removes sand or other foreign matter. They are then dried and given a coat of wax to cut down deterioration during shipment.



N-26571--Peppers are packed in forms like these. The forms become basket liners when wooden baskets are placed over them. Later, the baskets will be flipped right side up, the metal facing forms will be removed, and wooden lids will be fastened on for shipping.



N-26474--Snap beans are weighed in the field to determine picker's wages.



N-26507--A fork lift truck receives the freshly-picked beans from the grower's truck and moves them to the auction floor of the local cooperative. Beans are sold before they are sorted and packed.



N-26514--Prospective buyers examine a sample of the beans on the auction floor before the beginning of the trading.



N-26516--After being sold, the beans go through the cleaning machinery, which will remove soil or trash. They are also hand sorted to take out inferior beans.



N-26520--Filled crates of snap beans are weighed before being closed.

